CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

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Working Paper on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

The question of verification constitutes the greatest stumbling block to concluding a Comprehensive Test Ban. Although much progress has been made in developing the means of identifying earthquakes or nuclear explosions through long range teleseismic systems, the experts are all agreed that there is yet a gap to be bridged to make the seismic identification system foolproof.

In the general atmosphere of suspicion and distrust among states it is little wonder that exclusive reliance on seismic identification has not found full acceptance.

The Nigerian Delegation considers that to inspire the confidence necessary for concluding the Test Ban Treaty, a foolproof method of verification must be established. This will involve the augmentation of seismic verification with some other form of verification where the former is inconclusive.

The Nigerian Delegation is well aware of the reservations about "on-site" inspections. The Delegation believes that these reservations do not attach to the system, per se, but stem from the uneasiness that "on-site" inspections might be exploited for purposes of espionage. If therefore the possibility of espionage can be eliminated or reduced considerably, "on-site" inspections, where seismic verifications are inconclusive will, it is hoped, be acceptable.

In its working paper ENDC/232 of 20th August 1968 the United Kingdom Delegation proposed the establishment of a Committee that will undertake "on-site" inspections if strong evidence of a possible infringement of a Test Ban Treaty was produced. The proposal envisaged the inclusion of the super-powers in the Committee. Such an inclusion will not remove the basis of the reservations about "on-site" inspections. To overcome this short-coming, the Nigerian Delegation now recommends that the Committee should be composed, exclusively, of non-aligned countries that have signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty and possess the technological know-how to cope with the implications of such inspections.

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Such a Committee of non-aligned countries should allay apprehensions about "on-site" inspections. Since they would have signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the members of the Committee should not be interested in atomic weapon espionage because that Treaty prohibits them from putting into practical use any knowledge of nuclear weapons they may thus unlawfully acquire. On the other hand, their being non-aligned will ensure that they are unlikely to act as agents of the super-powers.